
The Impact of Pre-Event Coordination on NWS Customers

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WFO La Crosse Seminar Series #1

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Pre-Event Coordination

What would you do?

- Emergency Managers
 - Outdoor Events / Large public gatherings
 - Spotter Networks
 - Deployment / Number of spotters
 - Media
 - Staffing / Backup power
 - NWS
 - Staffing / Information dissemination
-

June 18, 1998

Can this be avoided?



LA CROSSE Tribune

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18, 1998 SERVING THE COULEE REGION SINCE 1904 50 CENTS

Wind blows big top over

Storm brings circus
halt; up to 25 hurt

**TRICIA DeWALL
EID MAGNEY**
Tribune staff

ST SALEM, Wis. — The show didn't go on today night after a severe storm toppled the big and Reid Bros. Circus tent with a full house of spectators inside.

Officials estimate 20 to 25 people were injured and taken to local hospitals to be treated for injuries suffered when wind lifted tent poles, causing the tarp to fall on an estimated 300 people sitting on bleachers.

"It was the most horrible thing I have ever been through," said Jenny Rojas of La Crosse, who was watching the circus with her children, Gabe, 9, and Ali, 2, at the La Crosse County Fairgrounds.

"There was no place to go," she said she had Ali in her arms and was holding onto Gabe by his shirttail while trying to get out of the tent. They were not injured, but couldn't breathe, dragging these two guys out. The poles were coming out. It was very scary," she said.

A spokesperson for Gundersen Lutheran Medical said seven people were treated there, with one released within hours of the accident. A remaining woman was expected to be released Thursday.

A spokesperson for Franciscan Skemp Medical said six people were treated there and all

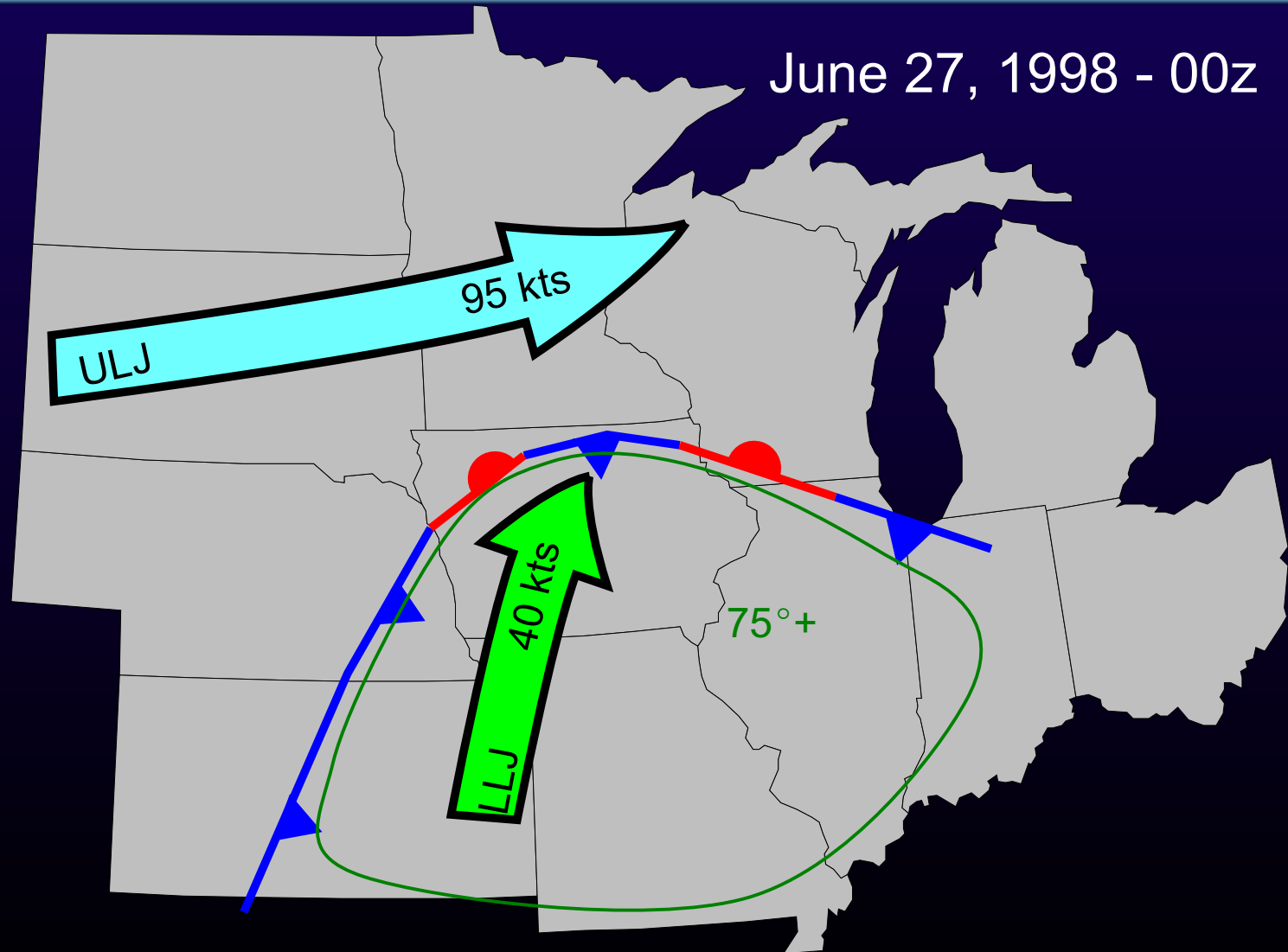


Pre-Event Coordination

June 27, 1998

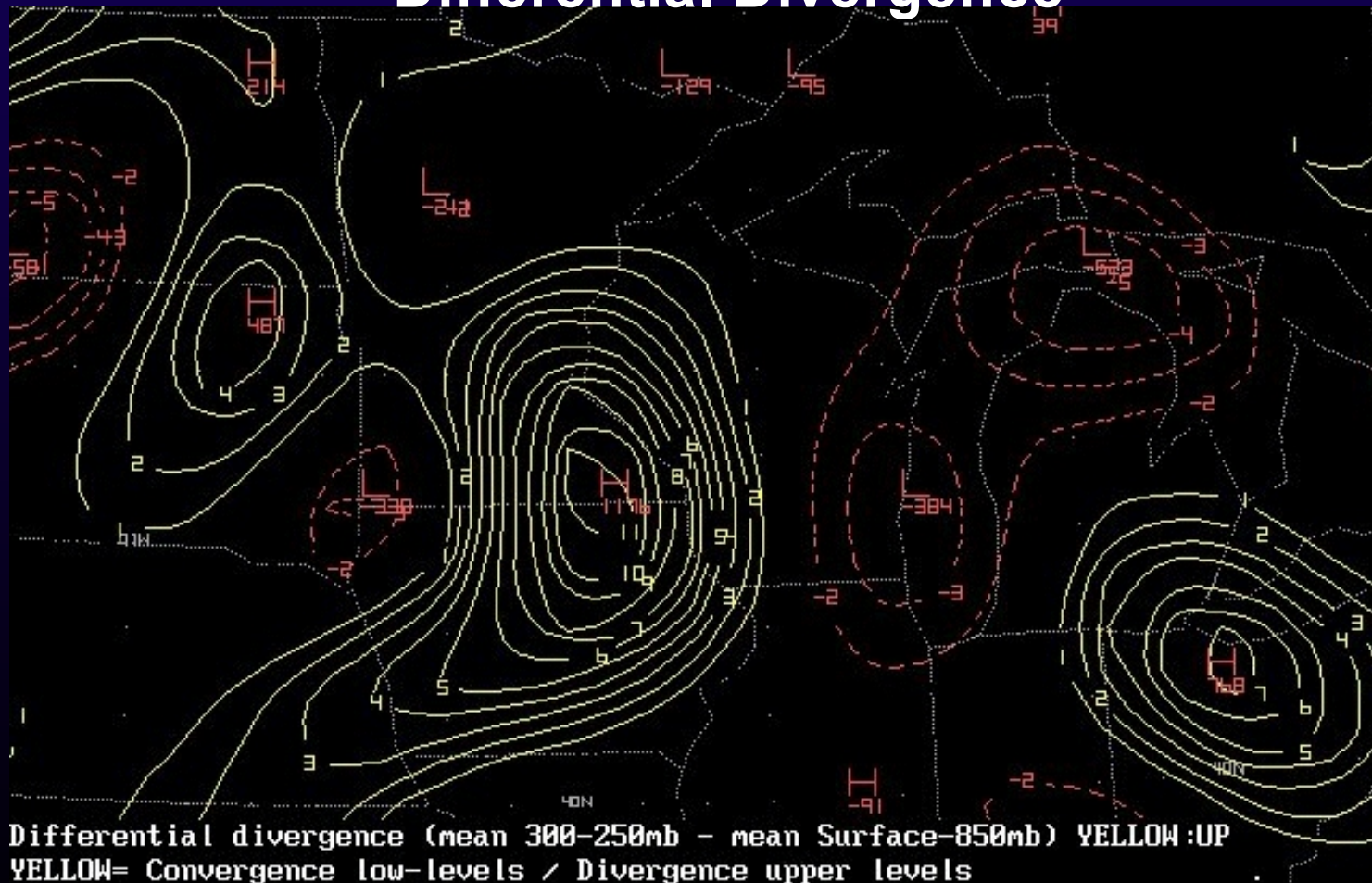
- Major Squall Line
 - Extensive damage
 - Spotter readiness
 - Dispatcher staffing
 - Notification for large, outdoor events
 - This is a success story - some are not
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Meteorological Background



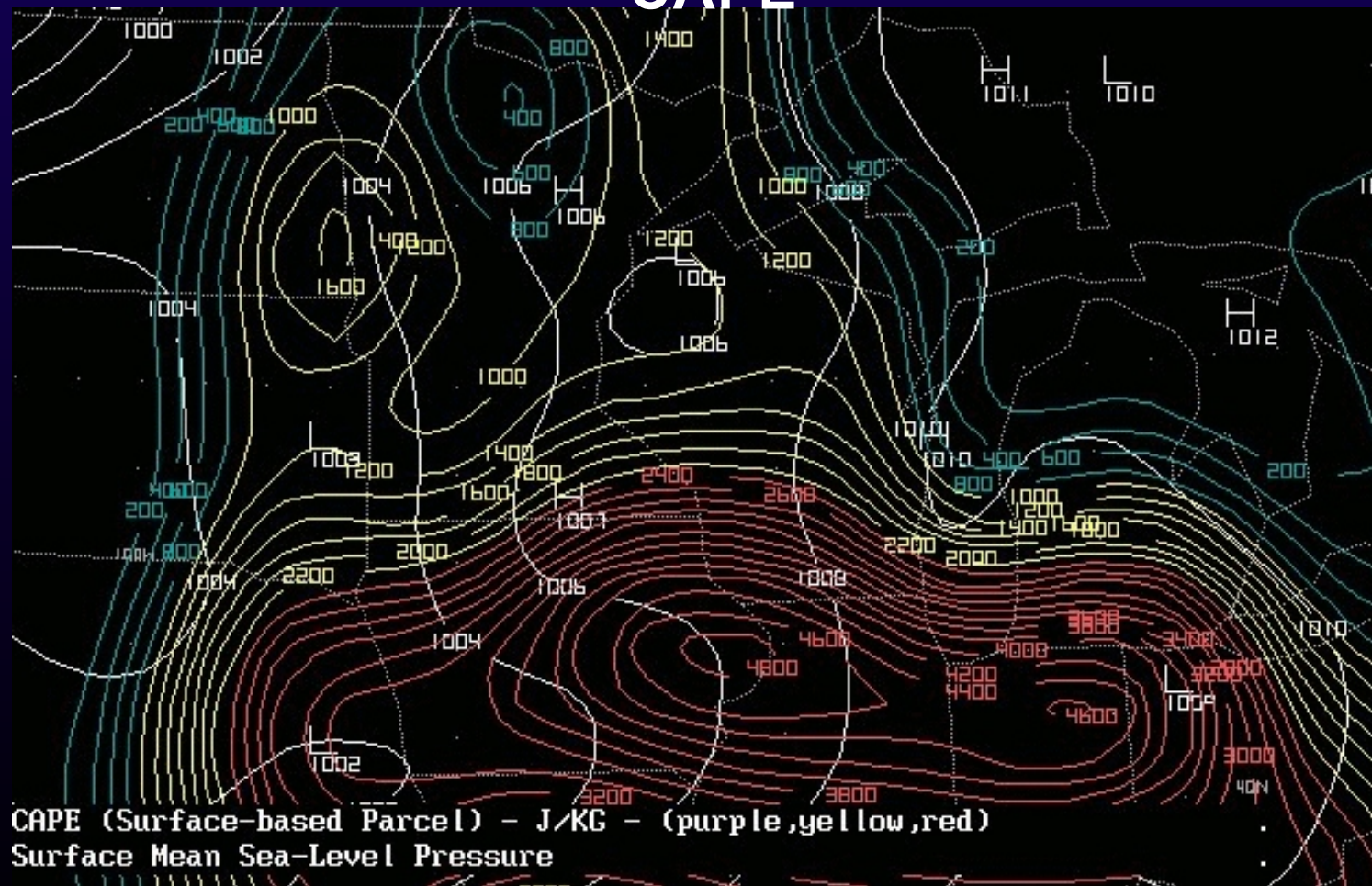
Meteorological Background

Differential Divergence



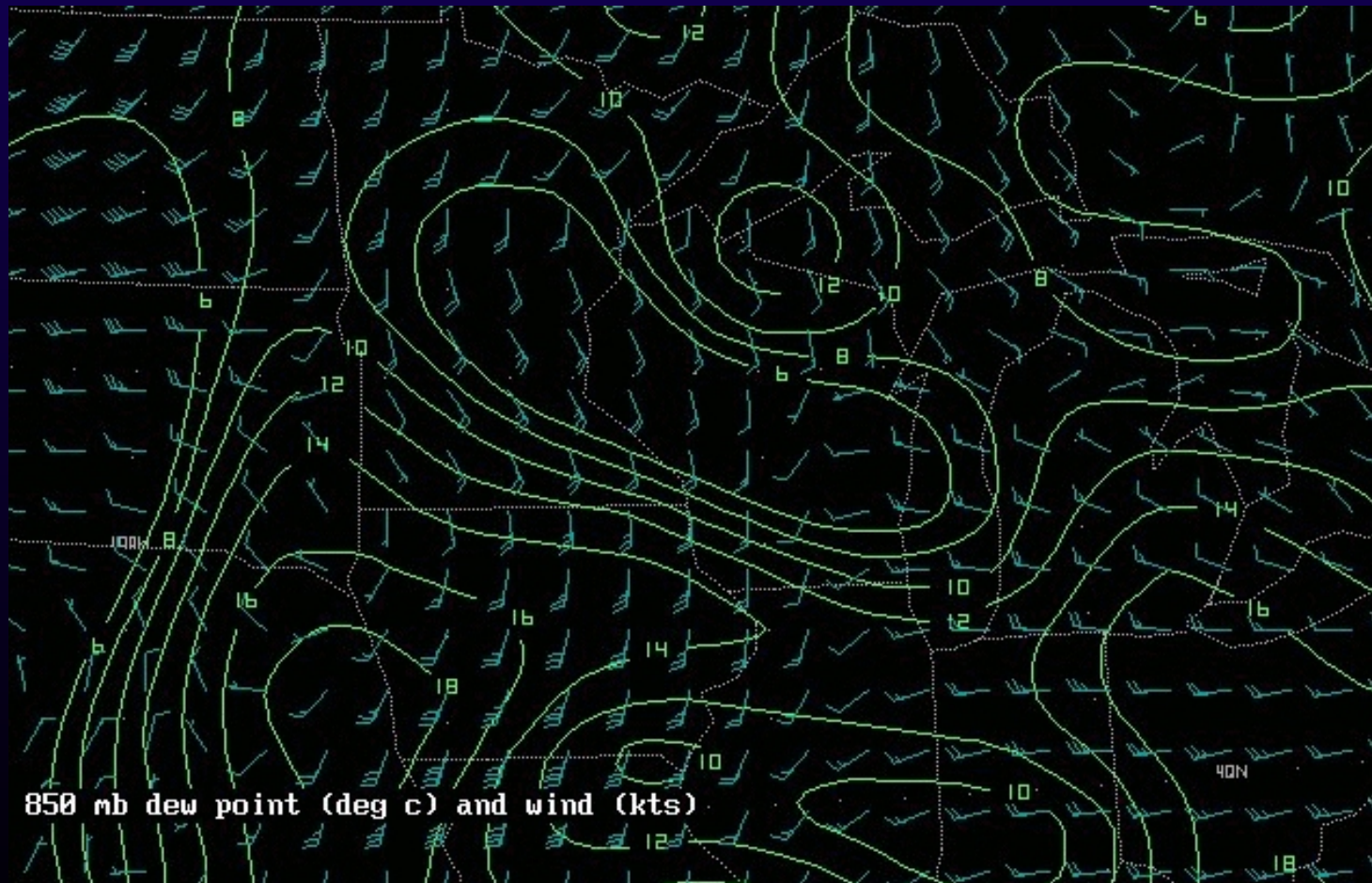
Meteorological Background

CAPE



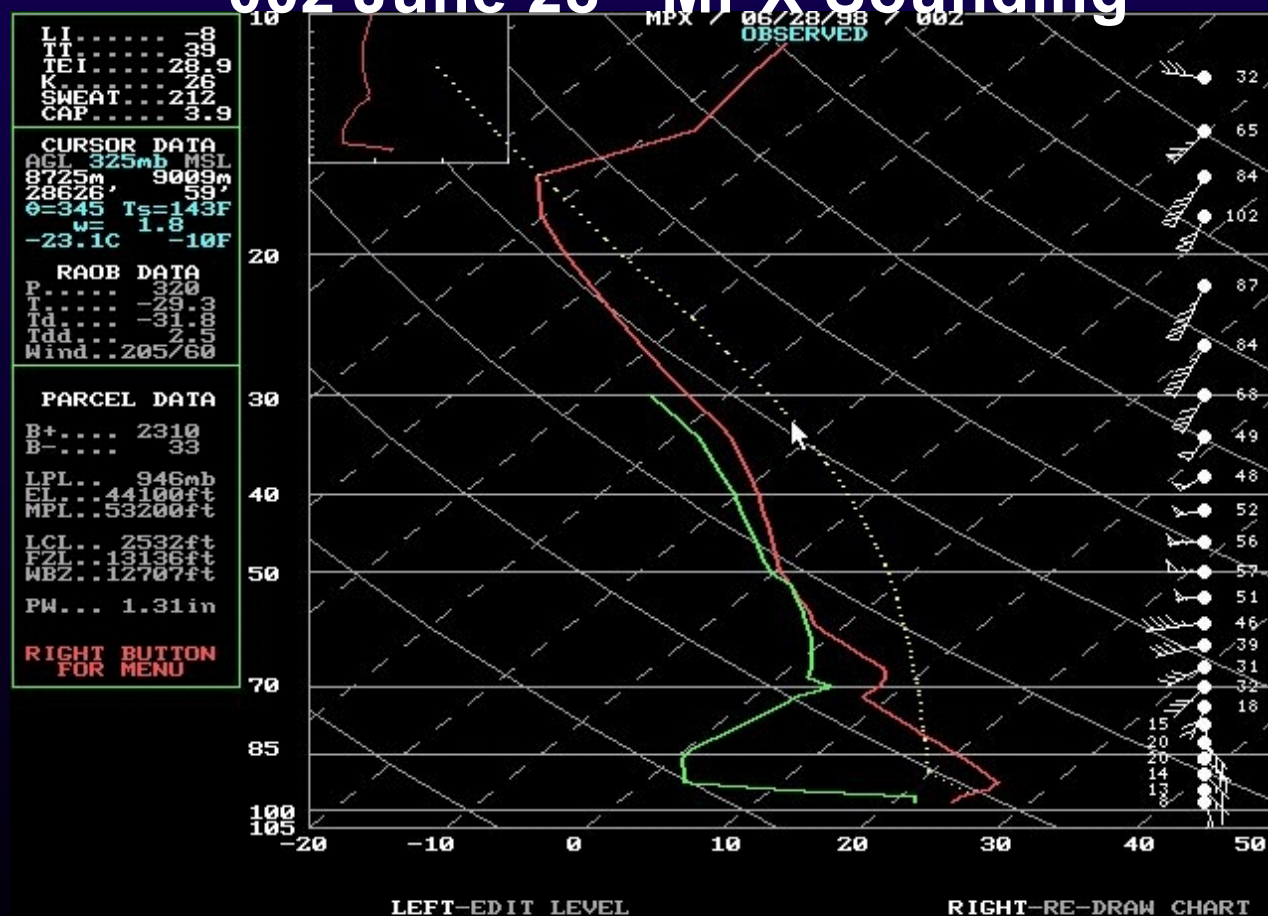
Meteorological Background

850 mb Dew Points



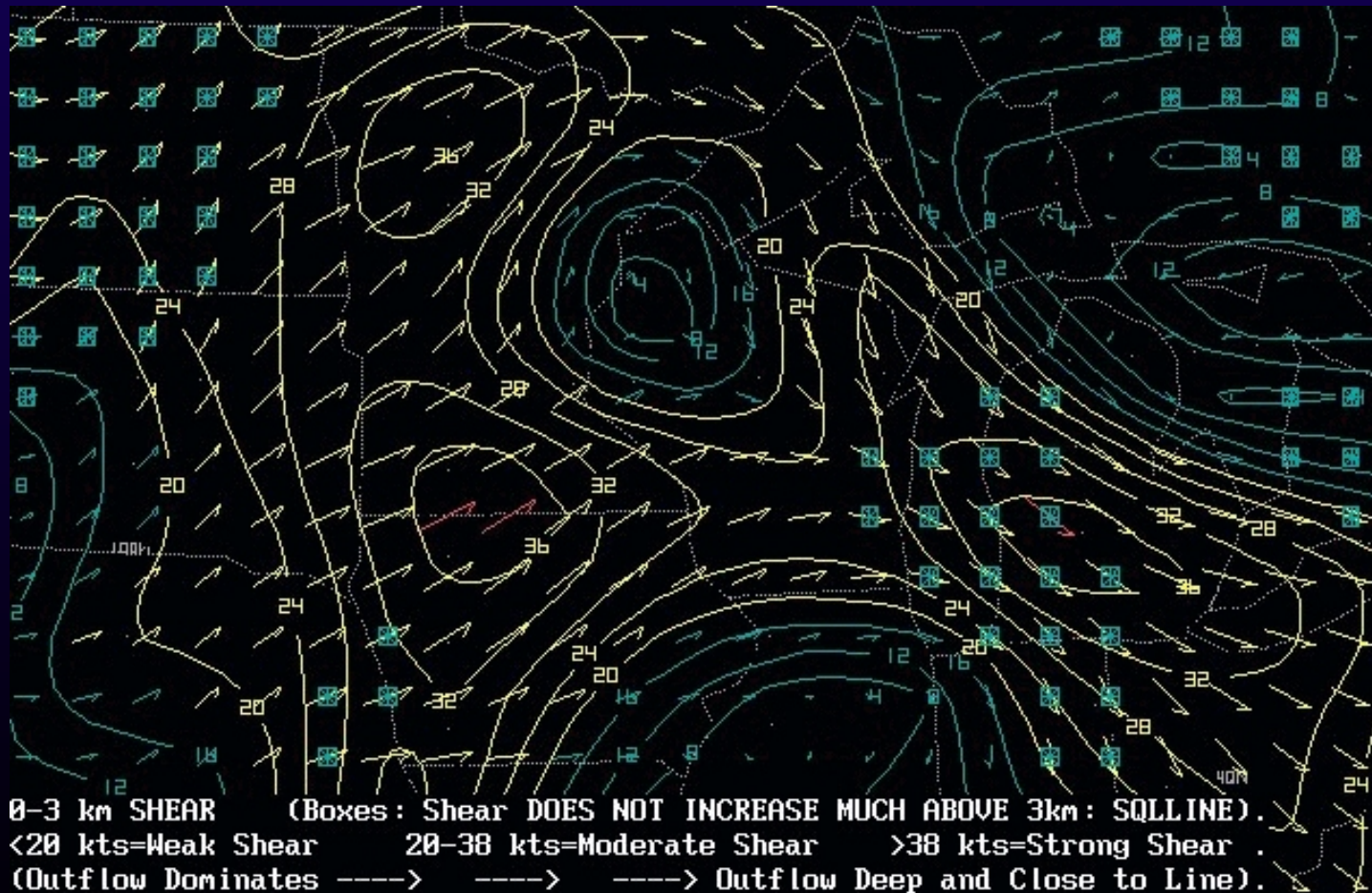
Meteorological Background

00z June 28 - MPX Sounding

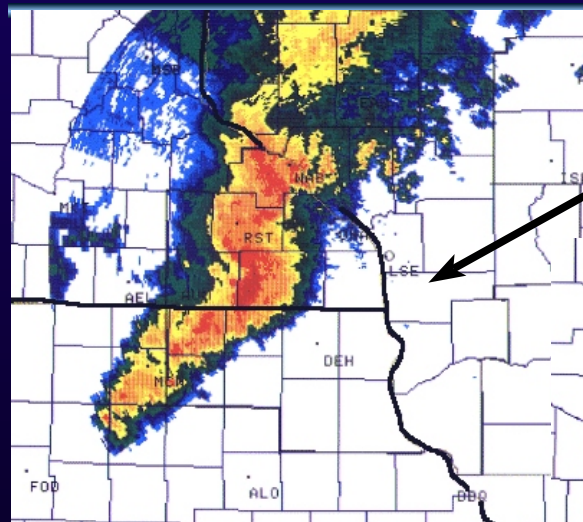


Meteorological Background

0-3 Km Shear

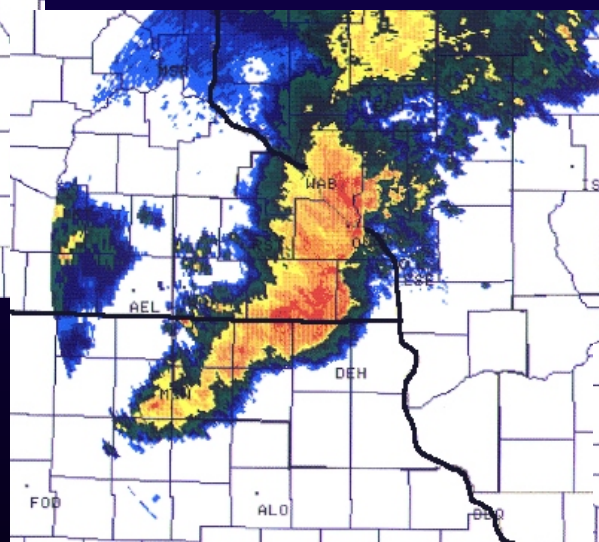


WSR-88D Images

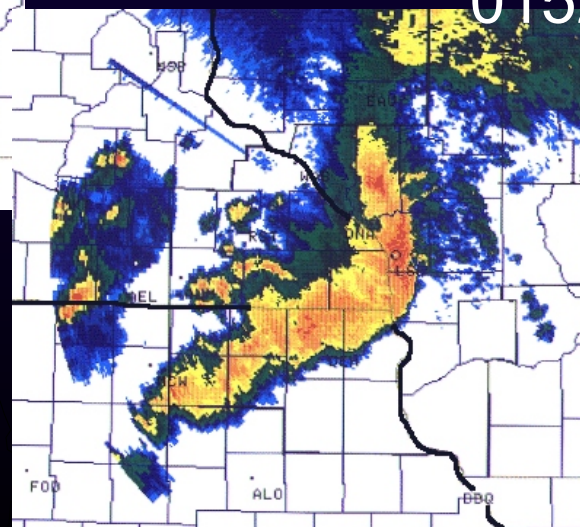


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La Crosse



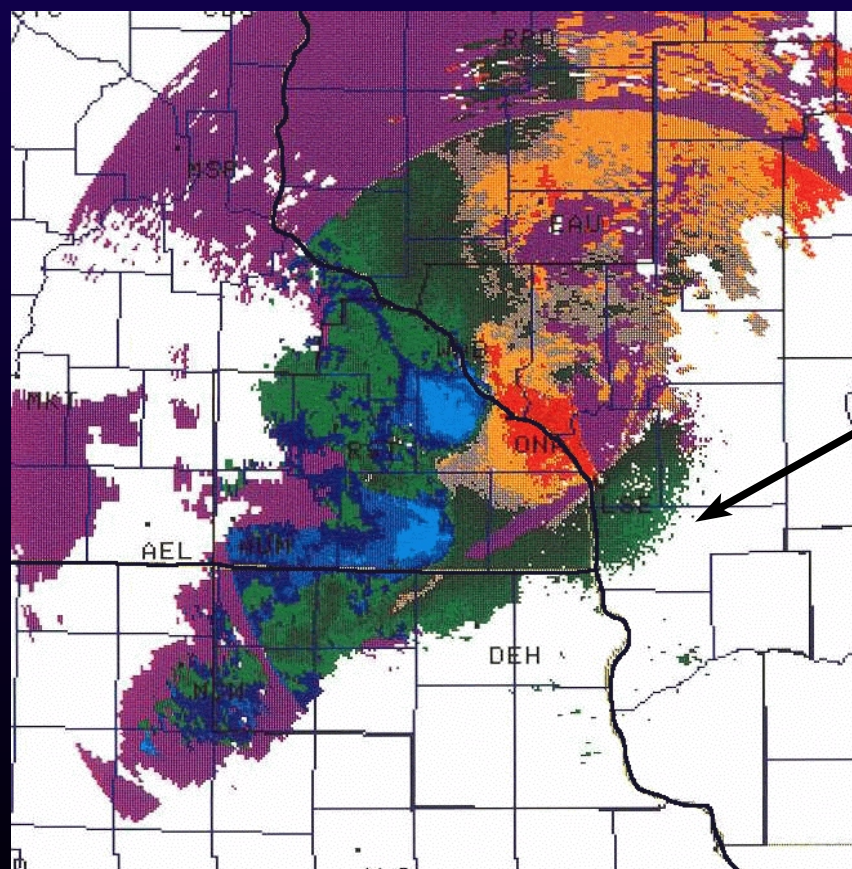
0132z



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WSR-88D Images

Base Velocity



La Crosse

Damage



Damage

Austin



Damage

Western Wisconsin



Damage

Western Wisconsin



Spotter Networks

June 27, 1998

- Hazardous Weather Outlooks
 - Issued at 11z & 18z
 - VHF Radio (Point-to-point)
 - Amateur Radio
 - Spotters in place BEFORE squall line hits
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Dispatcher Staffing

June 27, 1998

- Sources of information
 - ▶ L.E.T.S., VHF Radio, FAX, Telephone, Other
 - Hazardous Weather Outlooks
 - “Heads up” contact

 - La Crosse County calls in 5 extra dispatchers
 - ▶ Prepared for extra workload
 - ▶ Campground evacuation call - 1 hour before
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Outdoor Events

June 27, 1998

- Rochester Fest
 - ▶ Numerous contacts throughout afternoon
 - ▶ Able to clear streets; move people indoors

 - National Tractor Pull - Tomah, WI
 - ▶ Contact calls 2 hours before storm hits
 - ▶ Able to clear grandstands; people in cars
 - ▶ Command structure in question - lost time
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Summary of event

June 27, 1998

- Widespread damage
 - Straight-line wind, hail, flash flooding
 - Power outages
 - 23 of 28 counties declared Federal Disaster areas
 - No deaths - very few injuries
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Summary of event

June 27, 1998

- Advance notice DID make a difference
 - Helped prepare spotter networks
 - Helped expedite emergency response
 - Saved lives and prevented injuries
 - **Communication & information are essential!!**
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